

Consumer Advocate Profile with Lyn Whiteway

How did you start your advocacy journey?

After my Peer Education position ended at COTA due to funding loss, I sat on a committee representing the Council on the Ageing (COTA SA), the SA Health Safety and Quality Community and Consumer Advisory Committee, sat next to Michael Cousins and the rest is history!

I enjoyed this entry into advocacy so much that I started applying for other advocacy positions on committees where I felt I could make a difference. Once I started I soon realized just how important this work is.

How has advocacy enriched your life?

Advocacy gives me a sense of wellbeing, the work is vital and I find it very fulfilling. It is so important for consumers to have input into the health system and the thought that I am representing the people of South Australia makes me feel pretty special. It is both an honour and a privilege to be able to do this.

Why is advocacy important to you?

After a series of health issues and protracted use of the health system, I wanted to contribute to more effective health care with the use of informed views from consumers. Advocacy is the voice of the people striving to improve a health system, which has the potential to be one of the best in the world. I love being a part of that vision.

What has your involvement with HCA looked like?

Originally I joined HCA because of my initial meeting with Michael, since joining I have been a member of a number of committees including Transforming Health Consumer and Community Engagement Committee, the Royal District Nursing Services, Central Adelaide Rehab Services, Central Adelaide Primary Health Network, Peak Imaging Coalition which was started by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiography and other colleges involved with imaging in the Pacific Rim region, and the Palliative Care Health Priority Group. I have been given these opportunities because of my involvement with HCA.



I'm also a member of the HCA Policy Council and the Consumer Advocates Network. The Network is a fantastic way to interact with other advocates and learn from each other's experiences.

How long have you been involved with HCA?

I have been involved with HCA for over three years. I spend half a day a week in the HCA office volunteering. I didn't even know of its existence before I met Michael. I now know it to be a very important spoke in the wheel of health.

How do you think your advocacy work has made a difference?

I have been able to make a difference through being a consumer rep on several committees. One of the most important things I have achieved was to have the Advance Care Directive implemented into the Orthogeriatric Hip Fracture Model of Care Work Group as part of the Transforming Health work.

Something else I am very happy to have been a part of is the Chronic Pain Steering Committee. We were formed to improve the model of care for people living with intractable pain. This was very dear to my heart as I am a chronic pain sufferer and attend the Pain Management Unit at the RAH.

I think it is so important for the medical profession to hear from people with lived experience. I sometimes think we give them a vital insight into the other side of their profession. We help make them a little more aware of how their services impact on our lives with both good and bad experiences. We are sometimes a little thorn in their side, pricking them every now and then and reminding them that we are a part, a very important part, of the health journey.

